1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

St. Simons Island

131 ST. SIMONS, ONE OF THE LARGER COASTAL ISLANDS, lies off the Georgia coast not far from Brunswick on the mainland. For about fifteen years it has been connected by (491) causeway and bridge to the Coastal Highway. St. Simons has always had a considerable Negro population, owing to 177 the fact that from early times many large plantations as well as smaller settlements flourished on the island. This has given the Negroes considerable contact with white people and of late years with the rather sophisticated type of tourist. Fearing that the old customs would have been for- 124 gotten, we had little hope of good field work here.

However, we had not worked half a day in the north end settlements of the island before we were happily surprised. Around Harrington and Frederica there still live many old Negroes who remember the customs and beliefs told them by their parents and grandparents. Most of them are intelligent, reticent, and proud. Not easy of approach but with good manners, they responded to the request to help record the traditional beliefs of their forefathers. Once they had realized the object of our conversation, they talked freely and graciously, and several were outstanding for their keen comprehension.

115 We went to see Catherine Wing,* who lives at the corner of the Harrington Road and the main Frederica Highway. (342) Her comfortable frame house was set in the midst of a flower (351) garden and her washtubs were conveniently placed under a grape arbor and spreading live oaks.

(296)

* *Catherine Wing, St. Simons Island.*

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

[p. 55]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

MISCELLANEOUS WORK SONGS

533 461 By this time the reason for placing this chapter at the end of the collection must be obvious. Practically any of the foregoing songs were utilized in one kind of labor or another. The shout songs were peculiarly adapted to rowing; and certain of the religious songs were suited to the stevedore's need of a swinging tune in work that was continuous. There were, however, other tasks which required a special rhythm, dependent oftentimes upon the mood of the laborer, and these occasions were likely to bring forth extemporaneous compositions. Mrs. Shadman told me (296) that laundresses generally sang while ironing, and this is one of the improvisations she had heard:

(539)

Do tu'key buzzard len' me y'u wing
T' fly ova yonda t' see Miss Geo'gia King.

(234) (539) She had also heard churning done to these coaxing words:

Come budda come, Missus want e budda, come budda come.

533 461 296 But it was over the wash-board that a singer gave free scope to a religious turn of mind. Some years ago a Northern Negro composer, unfamiliar with the traditional songs of his race, heard the following spiritual sung by a washerwoman while at work. She claimed she had made it up; he innocently believed her, and told reporters that new spirituals are born every day. No one wishes more sincerely than I that such might be the case, but this particular song was sung in Glynn County long before he was born. It is Joe's favorite for swinging the weed cutter:

533 539

By an' by-e I'm goin' t' see the King
By an' by-e I'm goin' t' see the King
By an' by-e I'm goin' t' see the King
Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' if dyin' was all.

Wouldn' mind dyin' but I got t' go by myself
Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' but I got t' go by myself
O Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' but I got t' go by myself
Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' if dyin' was all.[27]

[27] A variation of this verse is expressed in these words:

Wouldn' mind dyin' but I got t' lay in the grave so long
Lord, I wouldn' mind dyin' if dyin' was all.